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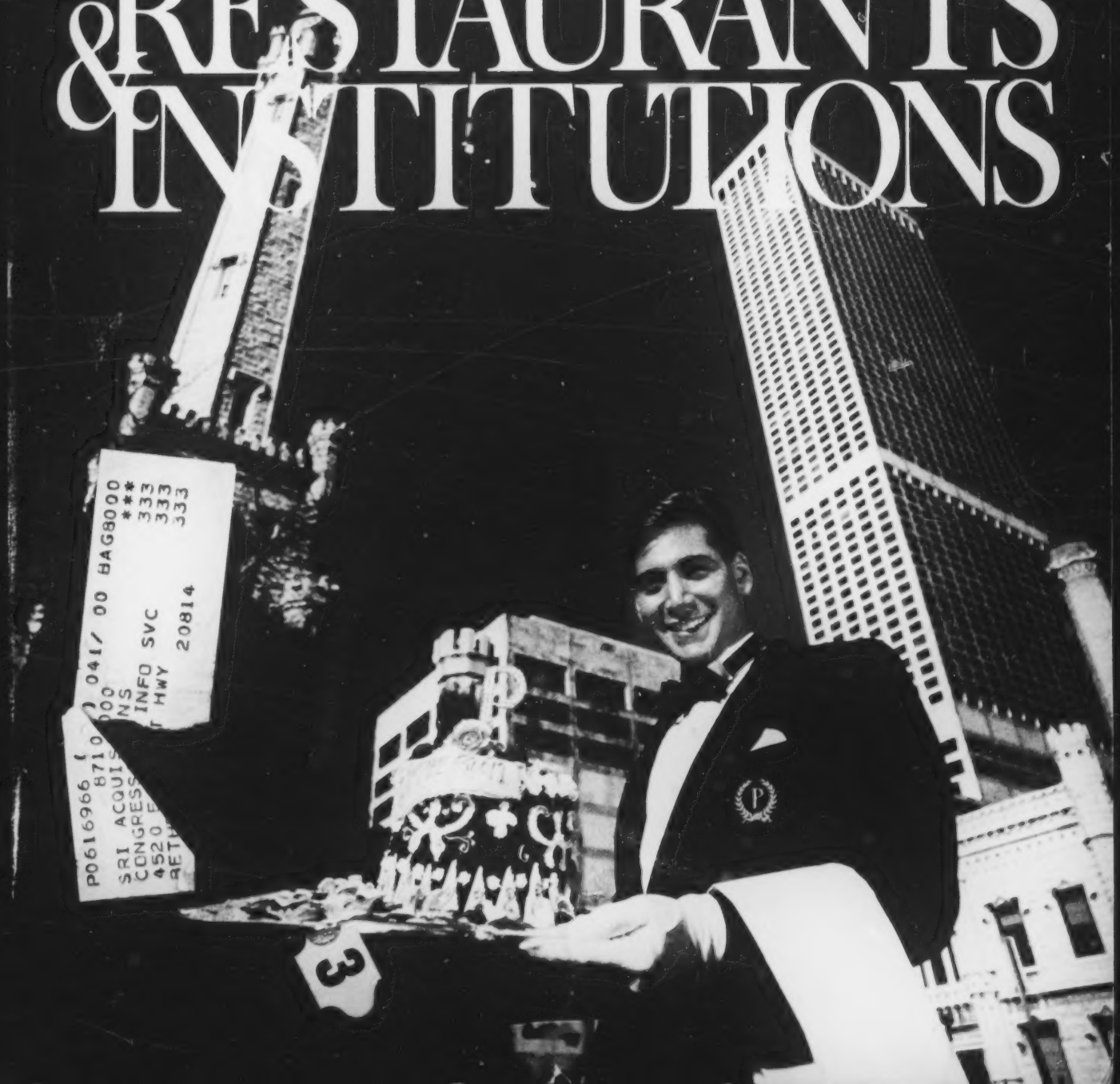

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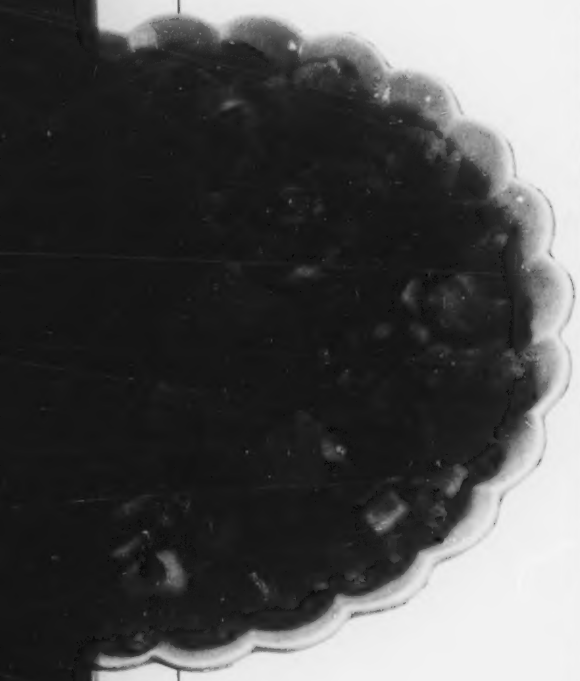

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MENUS

R&I DATA

FOOD COST INDEX: PRICE DECREASES KEEP MARKET-BASKET TOTAL LOW

Market-basket total for May is $103.37; year ago $104.03; month ago $106.04. Poultry shows the largest increase this month, 30% higher than April. Tomatoes also show a large increase in cost, up 22% from last month's 51 cents. Largest decrease shown is for breaded fish portions. This month's figure of $1.27 is down 27% from last month's $1.74. Peas show second largest decline; down 20% from last month.

		% Change	
	5/87	4/87	5/86
Hamburger (lb. 85% lean)	$1.26	2	- 1
Chicken (lb./cut for frying)	1.04	30	27
N.Y strip steak (lb./avg.)	3.56	- 2	18
Bread (Pullman loaf)	.75	-10	- 5
Lettuce (iceberg/head)	.55	2	10
French fries (30 lb.)	11.06	5	- 8
Tomatoes (lb.)	.62	22	5
Milk (gal.)	1.64	- 7	- 7
Eggs (doz.)	.71	3	-10
Peaches (case/#10)	18.49	5	- 6
Peas (case/#10)	10.14	-20	-26
Frozen beans (30 lb.)	16.31	6	1
Ice cream (vanilla/gal.)	2.80	-18	- 8
Butter (lb.)	1.53	- 9	—
Cheddar cheese (lb.)	1.54	- 2	—
Sugar (100 lb.)	27.25	- 4	7
Coffee (lb.)	2.85	- 6	- 6
Breaded fish portions (lb.)	1.27	-27	-11

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FOOD PRICE UPDATE

Fruit, Veggies and Chicken Make the News this Month

Stawberry harvest looks good, while chicken remains in demand.

Squash is becoming a very popular vegetable. Frieda Kaplan, Produce Specialties, Los Angeles, says the microwave has made squash a mass-market item. "Many of the squashes marketed as exotic or different are 'sports,' crazy mutations that sprang up when a careless gardener strew seeds. A generation ago, stringy spaghetti squash would have been unacceptable," explains Kaplan.

There are approximately 16,000 acres available for strawberry harvest in California this year, up 3% from 1986 and 10% more than 1985. The harvest was halted by frost in mid-January, which delayed the bloom.

Florida crops appear to be in excellent shape, with the area for harvest up a substantial 27% from last year. There have been no freezes in growing areas this year and the crop is reportedly disease free. Rain and hail, in early March, in Southern California sharply reduced availability. Supplies increased substantially over the next few weeks with temperatures remaining warm. Most shippers in central California started around March 15 as the harvest got underway.

Increased demand for chicken and related products has continued strong since March 1984 and the outlook calls for further increases. Another 4.1 million pullets were placed into supply flocks during January—up a substantial 20% from a year ago, indicating that producers are still expanding their flocks. Demand from further processors and fast-food restaurants has remained brisk and is expected to increase as more new poultry products are developed and introduced.

Current fad foods include country-style foods, jalapeño peppers, onions and blackened meats. Jalapeño peppers have taken over where raspberries used to reside. Onions used to be labeled by color, they are now "starred" on menus. ***—Kathleen Marshall***

Broccoli: Production in California last half of '86 totaled 123.7 million pounds, up 39% from last year. Cauliflower: California's fall pack was up 22% from last year to 62.2 million pounds. Asparagus: California is the leading source, annual supply peaked at 28% in April.